

The Man in the Gun Pit

HE WAS standing stoop-shouldered beside a rust-colored gun jacket, as heavy and unwieldy as himself, and even then I had a dim realization that the resemblance between them extended as much to the inner life as to the outer appearance.

The first came to me when I saw the jacket, no longer inert, emerge from the furnace. Slowly it swung out, suspended by the crab, which creaked and groaned its recognition of the weight it bore.

And, again, the underlying likeness was strengthened in my mind when I saw him at the dipping of the Howitzer packets—those stubborn iron pigs, who kicked and grunted, jerking themselves on their sides, lurching forward on to their noses, or backward on to their sterns, and all in a vain attempt to avoid the inevitable end.

During this time he, too, stood about, or sauntered until the time should be ripe. Not a man looked toward the one spot of life which formed the centre and consciousness of the group, but each was aware of it as a part of himself.

The great furnace which had hitherto been but one of a group of furnaces had sprung into prominence; bursts of flame gushed from it in intermittent puffs, and it seemed surcharged with a life which it could not much longer contain.

At last he made his decision, gave a shout, and they all sprang into life and action. The crane driver lowered the crab, until, with slow groanings, it almost disappeared into the furnace.

At first sight the impression was that of space, vast, abounding space, and it was only by degrees that there came to me the recognition of a group of furnaces in one corner; a crane, with ladders and stages ascending to the roof, in another; a couple of oil pits, and in the centre the great pit itself, from which the whole is named.

It seemed a mere outer show of that which lay within his mind, with its huddled group of experiences: the week-end on the Continent which had whetted his appetite for travel; the day in Oxford from which he had returned satiated by beauty, his arms as full of flowers as they could hold; and behind it all, like the grit on the ground, and the oil on the stagings, the rougher, cruder experiences of boyhood and youth; hardship, suffering, struggle, wrongdoing, followed by the wider repentance that brings content with what has been, since thus, and only thus, could real knowledge come.

And the outstanding impression of the man was as that of the ship—space. His knowledge of men and of guns had taught him that one is not as another, and that what is right for this man may be wrong for that, just as the treatment meted out to one gun may differ in vital details from that suited to another.

It was no wonder that on the one hand he held no bounden creed himself; nor that on the other, after one week's trial and two samples of steel set up, they should have wired to the Sheffield expert: "Come back, and leave it to Him."

I HAVE gone up to the top with him, and seen him hang suspended in mid-air on a slender iron rod, laughing up at me like a boy who glories in his strength; I have gone down to the depths with him,

and seen the darkness surrounded by endless sections of iron, studded with bolts and nuts, above which was the opening which led to air and light; and down there in the half-light I saw the hole leading to unknown regions of mystery and gloom in which the gas furnace lived; and as I leaned down close to the foul slurry to look in he told me of the man overcome by the fumes while mending a leakage, and how the others had dragged him out and laid him in that same slurry, into which he rapidly began to sink, and how it was left for Him to realize that at whatever cost this other man must reach the air above. There beside me was the spiral staircase up which he had staggered, round and round and round, with that weight on his shoulder, till air and life were reached.

And always what I have seen is more than a place or a man; it is the spirit and the life of both living in the one as much as in the other.

YET once again came a time of action and revelation. It was the time of the gun dipping, and the stillness of completed preparation had come upon the place. The shadowy sense of foreboding before the coming event added to the mystery and gloom already conveyed by the half-light glittering through the slit walls. A man here and there slouched against the dormant tubes, or sauntered aimlessly—waiting.

During this time he, too, stood about, or sauntered until the time should be ripe. Not a man looked toward the one spot of life which formed the centre and consciousness of the group, but each was aware of it as a part of himself.

The great furnace which had hitherto been but one of a group of furnaces had sprung into prominence; bursts of flame gushed from it in intermittent puffs, and it seemed surcharged with a life which it could not much longer contain. In their wanderings the men, though with apparent unconcern, made it the centre of their orbit.

At last he made his decision, gave a shout, and they all sprang into life and action. The crane driver lowered the crab, until, with slow groanings, it almost disappeared into the furnace. The attachment depending from it settled itself firmly about the collar of the tube within the furnace, and the moment had come.

A group of men vigorously wound a winch and the doors began slowly to open. The glare and throbbing heat threw all else into an even greater shade, and the great building became still more like a cavern in the dim recesses of which some secret rite was taking place.

AND now into the circle of light thrown from those doors he comes, his eyes shielded by an arm and the whole of his body curved with intensity as he examines the work of his hands. Again a shout, and this time the great tube slowly leaves its glowing den and swings out alone into the darkness.

At once its fiery surface is flaked here and there with black scale, as the cold air takes effect on its heat, but the pulsating life of the whole is untouched. It hangs for a moment quivering above the oil pit, and then gradually begins the descent.

With the first touch of the oil there is a cloud of steam and hissing, which increases in volume till the fumes burst into flame, and the final disappearance of the tube is in a blaze of light. And now the only trace of its existence is in the sullen boiling of the oil.

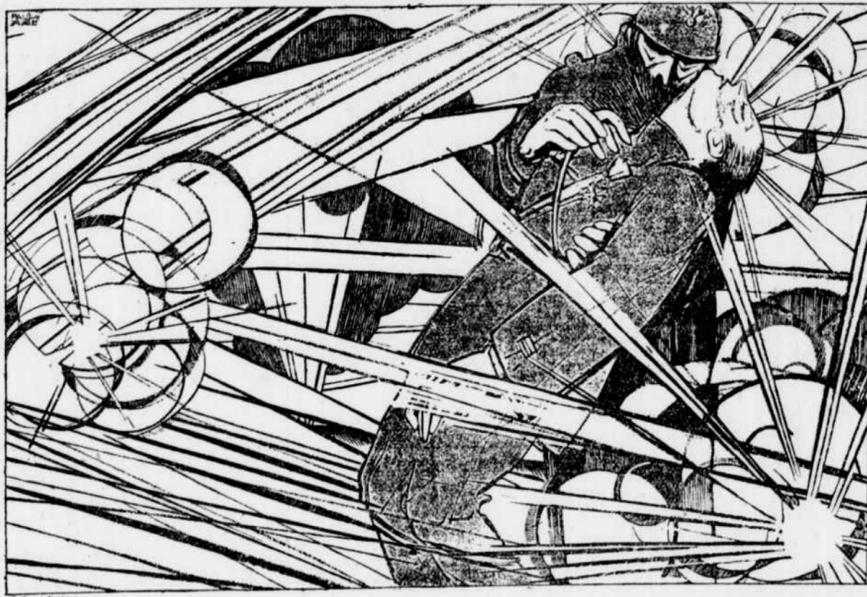
This, the consummation in the life of the gun pit, reached also a summit in the revelation of the man, its genius. In him was the same intensity of glow, touched but unextinguished by the incrustations of the outer air. No more than the gun itself would he go down without the last burst of flame, nor leave a surface untroubled by sullen boiling. That atmosphere of gloom and steam, mingled with the all-pervading smell of oil, held a sense of hidden things uncovered; behind me, a long time after I had gained the light and sunshine of the outer world, I could hear the resonant groaning of the crab.—H. F. R., in The Athenaeum.

THE CURSE OF QUON QWON (Mandarin) This is a multiple reel and the first production of the Mandarin Film Company, the only Chinese film manufacturing company in this country. It deals with the curse of a Chinese god that follows his people because of the influence of western civilization. The first part is taken in California, showing the intrigues of the Chinese who are in this country in behalf of the Chinese monarchical government, and those who are working for the revolutionists in favor of a Chinese republic.

A love story begins here, and is carried through the rest of the production. The last part of the film is made in China and carefully portrays actual Chinese customs, habits, etc.—From The Dramatic Mirror.



A Cubist Cross-Section of War



—From La Baionette

When Ships Are Not Boards

JOSEPH CONRAD is essentially the man of ships. His fine feeling for the sea distinguishes all his work. It is a quite different sea feeling than that displayed by Mr. Stevenson—less spectacular and, in a sense, perhaps, less romantic; but profounder, many have thought. When he is writing of ships Mr. Conrad's touch is deeply affectionate, yet always sturdy. To him ships are not—as upon the lips of Shylock they were made to appear—but "boards," though sailors happily remain mere men. To Conrad the nautical scene is richly furnished with a glow of life, which invests each ship with a vivid, haunting personality.

In his newest book, "The Shadow Line," this writer registers finely and with bright charm the sense of elation experienced by a young captain newly placed in command of a vessel. He was young and a sailor by instinct as well as training. And he exulted:

"A ship! My ship! She was mine, more absolutely mine for possession and care than anything in the world; an object of responsibility and devotion. She was there waiting for me, spellbound, unable to move, to live, to get out into the world (till I came), like an enchanted princess. Her call had come to me as if from the clouds. I had never suspected her existence. I didn't know how she looked, I had barely heard her name, and yet we were indissolubly united for a certain portion of our future, to sink or swim together."

"A sudden passion of anxious impatience rushed through my veins, gave me such a sense of the intensity of existence as I have never felt before or since. I discovered how much of a seaman I was, in heart, in mind,

and, as it were, physically—a man exclusively of sea and ships; the sea the only world that counted, and the ships, the test of manliness, of temperament, of courage and fidelity—and of love."

HE STOOD on the wharf, charmed. He feasted his eyes on the vigorous sum of her virtues:

"At first glance I saw that she was a high class vessel, a harmonious creature in the lines of her fine body, in the proportioned tallness of her spars. Whatever her age and her history, she had preserved the stamp of her origin. She was one of those craft that, in virtue of their design and complete finish, will never look old. Among her companions moored to the bank, and all bigger than herself, she looked like a creature of high breed—an Arab steed in a string of cart horses."

"A voice behind me said in a nasty equivocal tone: 'I hope you are satisfied with her, captain.' I did not even turn my head. It was the master of the steamer, and whatever he meant, whatever he thought of her, I knew that, like some rare women, she was one of those creatures whose mere existence is enough to awaken an unselfish delight. One feels that it is good to be in the world in which she has her being."

"That illusion of life and character which charms one in man's finest handiwork radiated from her. An enormous bulk of lifeless timber swung over her hatchway; lifeless matter, looking heavier and bigger than anything aboard of her. When they started lowering it the surge of the tackle sent a quiver through her from waterline to the trucks up the fine nerves of her rigging, as though she had shuddered at the weight. It seemed cruel to load her so."

"Half an hour later, putting my foot on her deck for the first time, I received the feeling of deep physical satisfaction. Nothing could equal the fullness of that moment, the ideal completeness of that emotional experience which had come to me without the

preliminary toil and disenchantments of an obscure career.

"My rapid glance ran over her, enveloped, appropriated the form concreting the abstract sentiment of my command. A lot of details perceptible to a seaman struck my eye, vividly in that instant. For the rest, I saw her disengaged from the material conditions of her being. The shore to which she was moored was as if it did not exist. What were to me all the countries of the globe? In all the parts of the world washed by navigable waters our relation to each other would be the same—and more intimate than there are words to express in the language."

AND when he went within the ship new delights rewarded him:

"The mahogany table under the skylight shone in the twilight like a dark pool of water. The sideboard, surmounted by a wide looking glass in an ormolu frame, had a marble top. It bore a pair of silver plated lamps and some other pieces—obviously a harbor display. The saloon itself was panelled in two kinds of wood in the excellent simple taste prevailing when the ship was built."

"I sat down in the armchair at the head of the table—the captain's chair, with a small tilt-compass swung above it—a mute reminder of unremitting vigilance."

"A succession of men had sat in that chair. I became aware of that thought suddenly, vividly, as though each had left a little of himself between the four walls of those ornate bulkheads; as if a sort of composite soul, the soul of command, had whispered suddenly to mine of long days at sea and of anxious moments."

"You, too!" it seemed to say; "you, too, shall taste of that peace and that unrest in a searching intimacy with your own self—obscure as we were and as supreme in the face of all the winds and all the seas, in an immensity that receives no impress, preserves no memories and keeps no reckoning of lives."

Current War Poetry

Children of War

NOT for a transient victory, or some Stubborn belief that we alone are right;

Not for a code or conquest do we fight, But for the crowded millions still to come.

This, unborn generations, is your war, Although it is our blood that pays the price.

Be worthy, children, of our sacrifice, And dare to make your lives worth fighting for.

We give up all we love that you may loathe Intrigue and darkness; that you may disperse

The ranks of ugly tyrannies and, worse, The sodden languor and complacent sloth. Do not betray us, then, but come to be Creation's crowning splendor, nor its slave;

Knowing our lives were spent to make you brave, And that our deaths were meant to set you free.

—Louis Untermeyer, in Collier's.

America Embattled

BRIDE of the Sea, in the light of the morning, Rise from your couch at the edge of the world;

Poised on the rocks, the twin oceans adorning, Count the bright stars in a standard long furled.

Rise in the splendor of youth and of beauty, Out of a slumber that bordered on death;

Call to your legions! See, honor and duty Start at the summons, and stir with your breath.

Star of the West, that the Lord of Creation Laid like a gem on the breast of the earth,

Lighting the way of the slave to salvation— Rise up in majesty, land of my birth.

Tyrants are plotting your death and your shaming; Liberty totters—America, wake! Stretch out your hand for the sword, fiercely flaming;

Strike, for your own and humanity's sake, Lo, she has risen! The visions that bound her, Wrapping her close in a fabric of dreams,

Serving the minions of Mammon around her, Fade when the Eagle of Liberty sareams.

Blow, all ye trumpets! Exult, O ye nations! Freedom's high priestess is once more arrayed

Proudly for battle. A world's tribulations Rouse her to action and whole-hearted aid.

Hail, she is coming! Behold then her banners! Who shall retard her triumphant advance?

Greet her with cymbals, with shouts and hosannahs; Mingle her stars with the lilies of France.

Hear ye those drumbeats, insistent, compelling? Treading the path that their forefathers trod.

Count ye her armies, with ranks ever swelling, Instruments all of the justice of God.

—Beatrice Barry, in The New York Times.

The Bell-Buoys Speak

SHIPS! More ships! (cry the buoys a-swing At the gates of the sea-ways). The message we bring

Is borne from the east by the storming wave, As it tears at the hold of our anchoring chain,

From the stormy east, from the swaying grave Of the dead who sleep

In their seaweed hammocks down deep, down deep, Till again, again,

A brave halloo in the brave daylight, A clang as of arms in the haunted night, The soul of the sea, and the souls of the dead

Unrighteously sped, Cry out to the land through our iron lips, Ships! More ships!

The smoking funnel, the tall pine-mast, The great, the small, The dragons of hell-fire are hunting them all,

The steel of the fighters their lure, they say, But no less, no less, The babe and its mother their lawful prey.

Ships! (cry the buoys). They drown so fast!

And the wheat that should succor a world's distress,— Till the deep sea groans for the bounty it bore,

And the outraged waves shout out to the shore Through the blood-stained foam on our iron lips, Ships! More ships!

Ships! (cry the buoys). How else shall be Outwitted the dragons that crouch in the sea?

How else, when the dragons are mastered and dead, Shall the world be fed? . . .

Young land where the fields are untouched by flame, Where the river's flood

Is water, not blood, Give ear as we cry in the old lands' name For the speeding sail and the hurrying screw.

Calling to you, With your treasures of tree-trunks and iron and gold

And your treasures of manhood, the Old World stands, Riven and blasted, starved, cold,

Bereft of its sons, its acres a-waste, And reaches its hands for the help of your hands.

Haste! cry the living, the dead, make haste With funnel and mast on the broad sea-lane!

And again, again, The need of the famished, the blood of the slain,

Cry out through the clang of our iron lips, Ships! More ships!

—Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, in The North American Review.

Daughter of Zeus

(For J. C.)

Tuerons la lune.—Martinetti

NO! We will not slay the moon, For she is the fairest of the daughters of Zeus, Of the maidens of Olympos.

And though she be pale and yet more pale Gazing upon dead men

And fierce disastrous strife, Yet for us she is still a frail lily Floating upon a calm pool— Still a tall lady in austere garments Comforting our human despair.

—Richard Aldington, in The Egoist.

Pliny the Elder

C AIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, better known as Pliny the Elder, died at Naples 1,388 years ago— August 24, 79 A. D. The son of a Roman equester, he was born at Comum in the year 23 A. D. Before he was 12 years old his father took him to Rome, where he was educated under P. Pomponius Secundus, poet and military commander, who inspired in him a love of philosophy and rhetoric. His military career was not insignificant, and he saw service as a commander of cavalry under Corbulo in Lower Germany. Famous principally for his rather stupendous work, the Naturalis Historia, he was the author also of a "History of the German Wars," in twenty books, which, however, was superseded by writings of Tacitus and sank into oblivion.

It was his interest in natural phenomena that resulted in Pliny's death. He was stationed at Misenum, as prefect of the Roman fleet, at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed Pompeii and Herculaneum. A desire for a closer observation of the phenomenon, as well as to rescue some of his friends, led him to cross the bay to Stabiam, where he perished.

HIS abounding industry and devotion to study called forth the following comment from his nephew and heir, Pliny the Younger, in a letter written to Maecr, twenty-seven years after his uncle's death:

"He began to work long before daybreak. He read nothing without making extracts; he used even to say that there was nothing so bad as not to contain some thing of value. In the country it was only the time when he was actually in his bath that was exempted from study. When travelling, as though free from every other care, he devoted himself to study alone. . . . In short, he deemed all time wasted that was not employed in study."

The William James of Russia

ALL smiles limp more or less, but it is pretty certain that he who has studied the works of both the only broad-gauged creator of a genuine American philosophical world system and of the one truly remarkable thinker that Russia has ever produced will easily find for himself the reason why such a caption as the above sprang into being. Few outside the strictly philosophical circles and the small group of students of Russian literature have a correct idea of the work of Vladimir Solovioff and his claim to be counted among the world's philosophical classics.

The latest edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica has not as much as a cross-reference at the place where we had the right to expect a full-sized article.

Well, everything comes to him who waits. The man who during his lifetime was regarded by all but a few friends and disciples merely as a clever and, at that, somewhat eccentric individual is now considered by the most competent critics the central figure in the development of modern Russian thought.

To the small but solid group of "appreciations" which appeared since Solovioff's death in non-Russian periodicals must be joined the well deserved tribute of love and respect paid to the great Russian thinker and brilliant writer by Mrs. J. N. Duddington in the last number of the "Hibbert Journal" (London), in the shape of a brilliant essay on the trend of his religious philosophy.

Throwing the Gods Out of the Window.

Who was Vladimir Solovioff? The few facts concerning his external life are quickly told. He was the son of the famous historian, Sergei Mikhailovich Solovioff (1820-1879), the author of a twenty-nine volume "History of Russia," born January 16, 1853, at Moscow, and brought up in his native town. In early youth he was a great admirer of Darwin, Renan and Ludwig Büchner, one of the heads of the then materialistic school of Germany. One day his parents surprised him throwing out of his room all the holy icons, i. e., images of the saints. The learned, tolerant father smiled, preferring, deep psychologist as he was, iconoclasm to indifference. His mother, who belonged to a noble Ukrainian family, smiled, remembering one of her ancestors, a considerable philosophical writer. She evidently believed in atavism.

In 1874 Vladimir graduated from the University of Moscow with a dissertation on "The Crisis of Philosophy in Western Europe." After a half year's instructorship at his alma mater he travelled for a year and a half through England, France, Italy and Egypt, increasing his then already enormous stock of knowledge. Soon after his return, in 1877, he was appointed associate professor at the University of Petrograd.

After the assassination of Alexander II, March 13, 1881, Solovioff, in a remarkable lecture, later condensed in the form of a direct letter to Alexander III, had the courage to ask for the pardon of the assassins of the "Czar-Liberator." This settled his official career, and although he had never been a great favorite with the Tchin (bureaucracy), he and his literary activity were henceforth more than ever watched by the censor and the Holy Synod, whose chief, Pobiedonostcheff of unsavory memory, accused him alternately of being in the pay of the Pope, of the Rothschilds and the Alliance Israélite Universelle!

Attacking the Black Hundred.

Solovioff, deeply immersed in religious matters, in order to be able to go to the bottom of the Jewish problem, studied not only the Biblical but also the Talmudical

The only fruit of all this unwearied industry that has survived to modern times is the Naturalis Historia, which in its present form consists of thirty-seven books—a vast encyclopædia of current knowledge and belief turning upon almost every known subject. It comprises 20,000 matters of importance, collected from about 2,000 volumes, the works of 100 writers of authority, together with additional matter, the results of his own experience and observation.

AS TO Pliny's theories and doctrines, no doubt he was considered in his time one of the maddest of the radicals. Of the infiniteness of the world he says:

"The world, and whatever that be which we otherwise call the heavens, by the result of which all things are enclosed, we must conceive to be a Deity, to be eternal, without bounds, neither created, nor subject, at any time, to destruction. To inquire what is beyond it is no concern of man, nor can the human mind form any conjecture respecting it. It is sacred, eternal, and without bounds, all in all; indeed including everything in itself; futile, yet like what is infinite; the most certain of all things, yet like what is uncertain, externally and internally, embracing all things in itself. It is the work of nature, and itself constitutes nature."

With Ptolemy, he believed in the spherical form of the world. "That it has the form of a perfect globe," he writes—

"We learn from the name which has been uniformly given to it, as well as from numerous natural arguments. For not only does a figure of this kind return everywhere into itself and sustain itself, also including itself, requiring no adjustments, nor measurable of either end or beginning in any of its parts, and is best fitted for that motion with which, as will appear hereafter, it is continually turning round; but still more, because we perceive, by the evidence of the sight, to be, in every part, convex and central, which could not be the case were it of any other figure."

Hebrew, and had, in 1890, the audacity, forsooth, to defend, in a pamphlet, his Jewish fellow citizens against the calumnious attacks of the Black Hundred.

The last eighteen years of his life Solovioff lived the life of a wandering philosopher, accepting the hospitality of his friends, among them the two Princes Troubetzkoi and Count Alexei Tolstol.

Entirely devoted to his work, he cared very little for external comfort. Overwork undermined his health, and July 21, 1900, he died on a property belonging to his friend and admirer, Prince Sergei Troubetzkoi.

The author of "The Critique of Abstract Principles," "La Russie et l'Église Universelle" (written in French), "The Religious Foundations of Life" and "The Justification of the Good" took the keenest interest in the social and political life of his country. At the risk of persecution he fought for absolute freedom of conscience, opposing all forms of tyranny and protesting against the cruel consequences of economic injustice under which the overwhelming majority of his fellow citizens had to suffer.

More Profound Than Tolstoi.

From his early youth he became a firm believer in the philosophical and ethical truths of the religion of Christ—another Tolstoi, but more profound, more learned than the mystical dreamer of Krasnoy Polnaya. He was a convinced advocate of the union of the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. The main purpose of his activity, however, was to show that Christianity and reason are not contradictory terms.

Solovioff's philosophical system might well be described as a sort of Neo-Paganism, and he himself as a kind of Russian Philo.

The identity of the World-Soul with Hagia Sofia, the Wisdom of God, or, in other words, the idea of a total and concrete revelation of the divine, had from the earliest times attracted the religious consciousness of the Russian people. The oldest Russian churches were dedicated to the Divine Intelligence, and one of the most attractive features for the Russian people in its Dream of Byzance is the sacred House of God near the Golden Horn, built by Empress Helen, and which for the last 464 years has been held by the infidel Osmanli.

Ossified as Greek orthodox theology appears to us Westerners, so much is certain that there are in this world of ours over 100,000,000 people, from the highly cultured Boyar to the illiterate muzik, who still firmly believe that the Deity has incarnated itself in the (according to their oldest and purest form of the Universal Church, the Greek Orthodox. To be the rational interpreter of this idea before the world at large was the self-imposed task of the life of Vladimir Sergeievitch Solovioff.

Telephone Brokers in Japan

In Japan, apparently, the main difficulty is not that the subscriber is cut off too soon or is not being connected quick enough, but that the instruments are hard to obtain.

In 1915 the city of Kobe had 1,488 applications for urgent telephone installations. Three hundred and ten were granted by the Department of Communications. In 1916 3,298 people sent in their applications; 700 were granted.

Why? There is no scarcity of instruments. But the telephone broker has become a well established institution in Japan. He obtains licenses as monopolists and leases them to the highest bidder.